

Whereas, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (NRCS) has a long record of working with private landowners to implement conservation practices and programs for the benefit of Louisiana's farms, wetlands, and wildlife habitats; and

Whereas, the Louisiana Waterfowl Working Group (LWWG) is comprised of a diverse group of landowners, managers, business owners, and professionals who share a common interest and concern over the direction Louisiana's waterfowl stock is heading; and

Whereas, the LWWG's mission is to ensure that waterfowl habitat remains a focal point for policy makers and stakeholders at all levels: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the National Resources Conservation Service, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to collaborate and contribute their knowledge and expertise with the Louisiana Waterfowl Working Group in an effort to improve waterfowl habitats on private, state, and federally owned lands; and be it further

Resolved, That the LWWG shall submit an annual written report to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and Senate Committee on Natural Resources detailing the results of its collaborative efforts to improve waterfowl habitats on private, state, and federally owned lands; be it further

Resolved, that the report should consider meaningful updates on habitat trends, policy recommendations, and other relevant topics related to Louisiana waterfowl, and the habitats they depend upon; be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, Louisiana State Conservationist, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Region 4 Director, and the officers of both houses of the United States Congress and each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-36. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of New Jersey urging the President of the United States and the Environmental Protection Agency to take appropriate action to issue waivers and implement other reforms to allow for the blending of renewable fuels under the federal "Clean Air Act"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 238

Whereas, Over the past year, United States refiners have been devastated by spiking, volatile Renewable Identification Number (RIN) prices under the federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program and a dramatic reduction in the use of fuel that was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have resulted in a shortage of RINs, and eight refinery closures, throughout the nation; and

Whereas, The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has authority from Congress to waive the RFS program's renewable fuel requirements "in whole or in part" if the EPA Administrator determines that "implementation of the requirement would severely harm the economy" of a State, region, or the United States; and

Whereas, Many independent refiners already struggle with slim margins and the RFS program's RIN requirements, as well as the manner in which the unregulated RIN market operates without oversight and subject to speculation and fraud, all of which

are currently inflicting serious economic harm on those businesses; and

Whereas, Current RFS compliance expenses exceed refineries' combined annual costs for labor, utilities, and maintenance, making the costs of such compliance refineries' largest expense, other than the purchase of crude oil; and

Whereas, RIN prices have dramatically increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing from as low as 10 cents at the beginning of 2020 to nearly \$2.00 in June 2021, and leading to a consequent increase, of approximately 30 cents per gallon, in the cost of making gasoline;

Whereas, Harmful financial effects associated with the complex RFS program are especially severe under current market conditions, where demand for refined products is significantly depressed by the COVID-19 pandemic and is not expected to fully recover in the near future; and

Whereas, The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented year-over-year decline in demand for petroleum and other liquid fuels, leading to temporary, partial, and permanent refinery closures, including the mothballing of the fuels section of the Paulsboro Refinery in New Jersey, as well as other capacity reductions throughout the United States; and

Whereas, Production data published by the Energy Information Administration (EIA) in the United States Department of Energy (DOE) has repeatedly shown, for several years, that there is no relationship between RIN prices and the amount of ethanol that's actually blended into the nation's gasoline supply; and

Whereas, The EIA recently noted that, in 2020, 800 million fewer RINs were actually generated than what was required to meet the 2020 RFS standard, thereby resulting in a shortage of available RINs, especially when combined with hoarding by unregulated, non-industry speculators; and

Whereas, Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, State and regional refineries supported over 16,500 New Jersey jobs, compensating those employees with more than a billion dollars in total, while adding \$4.2 billion to the State's gross domestic product and generating over \$12.3 billion in total economic output, including the payment of more than \$382 million in State and local taxes. Unfortunately, some of the jobs supported by these refineries were lost due to a partial shutdown attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, Refining and petrochemical industries contribute approximately \$600 billion annually to the nation's economy and employ over three million industrial workers in 33 states, but increasing dependence on imported fuels threatens these industries and potentially affects their fuel supplies; and

Whereas, The recent hacking incident affecting the Colonial Pipeline has exposed the vulnerability of the nation's energy supply, highlighting the need to keep our refineries open to fuel the economy; and

Whereas, On June 1, 2021, Governor Phil Murphy wrote to the EPA to urge the agency to extend flexibilities to merchant refiners through the renewable volume obligation under the RFS program; now, therefore, and be it

Resolved, By the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey respectfully urges the United States Environmental Protection Agency to exercise its waiver authority, pursuant to section 211(o)(7)(A)(i) of the "Clean Air Act," 42 U.S.C. s.7545(o)(7)(A)(i), to reduce nationwide Renewable Fuel Standard volume mandates in order to provide relief to refiners in New Jersey, on the East Coast, and elsewhere.

2. The Legislature also respectfully urges the President of the United States and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to establish reasonable 2021 and 2022 Renewable Fuel Standard volume mandates, which are in line with actual gasoline and diesel demand, and to make the reforming and restructuring of the Renewable Fuel Standard program a national priority, so as to maintain low and stable Renewable Identification Number prices while allowing for the continued blending of renewable fuels consistent with the original intent of the program.

3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Secretary of the Senate to the President of the United States, the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and every member of Congress elected from this State.

4. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MANCHIN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Robert T. Anderson, of Washington, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior.

*Shalanda H. Baker, of Texas, to be Director of the Office of Minority Economic Impact, Department of Energy.

*Samuel T. Walsh, of New York, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

*Andrew Eilperin Light, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs).

By Mr. DURBIN for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Gustavo A. Gelpi, of Puerto Rico, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Angel Kelley, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

Christine P. O'Hearn, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Helaine Ann Greenfeld, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Christopher H. Schroeder, of North Carolina, to be Assistant Attorney General.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 2428. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to modify False Claims Act procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.